

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9392
INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE POUCH
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4143

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, SREF, AO, CG
SUBJECT: VISIT TO ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN BAS ZAIRE

REF: A) KINSHASA 2625 (NOTAL); B) GENEVA 2725 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: ANGOLA DESK OFFICER DOUBLEDAY AND EMBOFFS VISITED ANGOLAN

REFUGEE AREAS IN BAS ZAIRE APRIL 19-21. RECENT INFLUX OF NEW ANGOLAN

REFUGEES BEGAN TO TAPER OFF IN EARLY APRIL AND NOW TOTALS BETWEEN FIFTY

AND SIXTY THOUSAND. MOST OF THESE NEW REFUGEES HAVE NOW MOVED FROM
THE BORDER AREAS AND ARE SETTLED ALONG THE MATADI-KINSHASA ROAD AND
RAILWAY. END SUMMARY.

2. ANGOLA DESK OFFICER AND EMBOFFS VISITED ANGOLAN REFUGEE POPULATION

IN BAS ZAIRE REGION APRIL 19-21. DURING TRIP THEY LEARNED THAT THE
FLOW OF REFUGEES ACROSS BORDER, WHICH BEGAN IN NOVEMBER 1977,
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SUBSIDED AROUND SECOND WEEK IN APRIL. AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY
DOCTOR INVOLVED IN RELIEF EFFORTS ESTIMATES THE TOTAL NUMBER
OF THESE NEW REFUGEES AT 50,000 TO 60,000 ROUGHLY HALF OF THE
ANGOLAN REFUGEE POPULATION LIVING IN THE SAME AREA BEFORE 1975.
WHILE THE NEW REFUGEES ORIGINALLY STOPPED IN VILLAGES JUST
INSIDE THE BORDER, MOST HAVE NOW MOVED FARTHER NORTH TO AREA
ALONG MATADI ROAD AND RAILROAD.

3. WHILE MANY OF THE REFUGEES ARE FROM SAO SALVADOR AREA IN ANGOLA, MANY OTHERS ARE FROM FARTHER SOUTH, INCLUDING THE CARMONA, AMBRIZ, AND AMBRIZETE AREAS. ONE GROUP IS FROM DAMBA, A TOWN DUE WEST OF CARMONA. REFUGEES SAID THAT AFTER DEFEATING FNLA IN EARLY 1976, FAPLA

(ANGOLAN ARMED FORCES) AND CUBAN FORCES STUCK MAINLY TO THE LARGE TOWNS AND MAIN ROADS. THEY BEGAN TO EXPAND THEIR CONTROL OF TERRITORY IN 1977, BUT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF 1978 THAT THEY PENETRATED DEEPLY INTO THE FORESTS WHERE THE VILLAGES BELONGING TO THESE REFUGEES WERE LOCATED. THIS PENETRATION IS WHAT CAUSED THE CURRENT EXODUS. REFUGEES CLAIMED THAT FAPLA/CUBANS CONSIDER ALL INHABITANTS OF THE AREA AS THE ENEMY BECAUSE OF THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH FNLA. THEREFORE THEY ATTACKED THESE VILLAGES WITH HEAVY WEAPONS AND AIRCRAFT, KILLING ADULTS AND CHILDREN INDISCRIMINATELY AND TAKING YOUNG MEN AWAY WITH THEM, AFTER THE FIGHTING

ENDED.

4. REFUGEES CONFIRMED EARLIER REPORTS THAT THEY HAD BEEN ESCORTED INTO ZAIRE BY FNLA CADRES (REF A). AN AMERICAN MISSIONARY DOCTOR SAID THAT FNLA CADRES ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO KEEP REFUGEES UNDER THEIR CONTROL, EVEN TO EXTENT OF REPORTING TO GOZ REFUGEES THEY FELT THEY COULD NOT TRUST. SOME OF THOSE LATTER HAVE BEEN ARRESTED BY

GOZ AND TAKEN TO KINSHASA.

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5. DURING DRIVE OF ABOUT 20 KM ALONG BORDER, FAZ PRESENCE WAS ALMOST NONEXISTENT. IT CONSISTED OF THREE SOLDIERS WITH NO WEAPONS AT BUT ONE POST AND EVEN THESE THREE APPEARED MOST RELAXED. AMERICAN MISSIONARY DOCTOR, WHO HAD RECENTLY TALKED TO THESE SOLDIERS, REPORTED THAT THEY TOLD HIM THERE WAS A FAPLA POST LOCATED OVER A HILL JUST ACROSS THE BORDER, THAT FAPLA AND CUBANS ENTERED THE AREA FOR FIRST TIME AFTER ATTEMPTED COUP IN LAUNDA IN MAY 1977, AND THAT CUBANS SUBSEQUENTLY DEPARTED. OTHER THAN THIS ONE REPORTED POST, THERE WAS NO OTHER INDICATION OF FAPLA OR CUBAN PRESENCE IN THAT AREA OF THE BORDER. LOCAL OFFICIALS DID CONFIRM, HOWEVER, THAT ON APRIL 6 A FAPLA UNIT IN PURSUIT OF REFUGEES CROSSED THE BORDER IN SONGOLOLO ZONE, BUT QUICKLY RETREATED.

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